

## Section

# 1

# Germany

### READ TO DISCOVER

1. What are some key events in the history of Germany?
2. What are some features of German culture?
3. What is Germany's economy like?
4. What issues and challenges does Germany face today?

### WHY IT MATTERS

The German government once invited foreign workers to the country in order to solve a labor shortage. Now some Germans are taking jobs in other countries. Use [cnnfyi.com](http://cnnfyi.com) or other **current events** sources to learn about labor shortages and how countries deal with them.

### DEFINE

alliances  
balance of power

### LOCATE

Berlin  
Bavaria  
Ruhr Valley



Ivory carving from  
Dresden, Germany



## Central Europe: Physical-Political







*King Louis II of Bavaria had this castle, Neuschwanstein, built in the mid-1800s. It is a fanciful version of a medieval German castle. Louis spent his family fortune and part of the country's treasury to pay for the castle. It is now a major source of income for Bavaria's tourism industry. Every year, approximately 1 million tourists visit Neuschwanstein.*

## History

From its location in the heart of Europe, Germany has helped shape the continent's history. Many Germanic tribes fought against the Roman Empire. During the A.D. 700s a ruler called Charlemagne united several German kingdoms. Later the region broke into hundreds of small states, each with its own ruler. The German states became part of a loose confederation called the Holy Roman Empire. By the 1300s, about 100 northern German towns formed a trading group known as the Hanseatic League. This group dominated trade in the Baltic region. By the 1700s, a number of powers controlled or strongly influenced the German states. Among these powers were the German state of Prussia and the Habsburg Empire, which later became the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Prussia led the movement to create a single German country. Northern and southern German states united in 1871. From 1890 to 1914, Germany prospered and became a great industrial and military power. Germany's army and navy were among the strongest in Europe.

**The World Wars** The rapid rise of German power worried other European countries, particularly France, Great Britain, and Russia. As a result, many European countries formed military **alliances**. An alliance is an agreement between countries to support one another against enemies. Countries that are joined in an alliance are called allies.

These alliances helped maintain a **balance of power** in the region for some time. A balance of power exists when countries or alliances have such equal levels of strength that war is prevented. World War I erupted in 1914 partly because the balance was upset. Britain, France, Russia, and later the United States

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joined forces against Germany. Germany was allied with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire. After World War I ended in 1918, Germany had to accept harsh peace terms imposed by the victors. Germany's economy also collapsed in the 1920s. Food shortages, high inflation, and high unemployment caused severe hardships.

Germany's economic and political problems helped bring the Nazi Party to power in 1933. Adolf Hitler was the Nazi leader. Under Hitler, Germany rebuilt its military and allied itself with Italy and Japan. In 1939 Germany invaded Poland, sparking World War II. Fighting soon involved most of the European continent and later much of the world. The United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and other allies finally defeated Germany in 1945. Some 50 million people had lost their lives. Germany and much of Europe lay in ruins.

**Division and Reunification** The Allied victors of World War II divided Germany. Soviet troops occupied eastern Germany as well as most of Eastern Europe. British, French, and U.S. troops occupied western Germany. Over time, two countries emerged from this division, East Germany and West Germany. Communist governments ruled East Germany as they did other Eastern European countries. West Germany became a democracy. West Germany also rebuilt rapidly with U.S. aid and soon became a global economic power. However, the economy of East Germany lagged. In 1990, following the collapse of communism, East and West Germany reunited.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *The Uses of Geography* How did World Wars I and II affect Germany?

## Culture

Today Germany has a democratic system of government. Berlin is the capital. (See Cities & Settlements: Berlin.) The country is divided into 16 states, or *Länder*, which vary in size and population. Bavaria, in the south, is the largest German state in area.



From 1961 to 1989, Berlin was split into a communist East and a capitalist West by a heavily guarded concrete wall. During this time, about 5,000 people escaped over, under, or through the wall into West Berlin.

*A traditional carnival celebration winds through the streets of Mainz. The city serves as the capital of Rhineland-Palatinate, one of the Länder of southwestern Germany. Mainz is famous as the home of Johannes Gutenberg, the inventor of movable type printing.*





#### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

Flowers are grown as a cash crop near western German cities. **How may strict environmental laws have affected the marketability of Germany's crops?**

#### Germany's Labor Force



Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2001*

#### INTERPRETING THE GRAPH

**What part of Germany's economy has the largest number of employees? How does Germany's labor-force distribution compare to that of most developing countries?**

German is the dominant language, although it has several regional dialects. Novels, plays, and poetry written in German have enriched world literature. German composers and artists have also created great works. About a third of Germans are Roman Catholic, and a larger number are Protestant. Southern and western areas are more Catholic than northern and eastern regions. Many Germans do not attend religious services of any kind. German food features pork, sausages, veal, and cheeses. Rich pastries are popular desserts.

In recent years concern over Germany's environment has grown. Many people worry about the effects of air and water pollution and acid rain. "Green parties" are well established in government. These parties have helped pass laws to protect the country's natural environment. As a result, Germany now has some of the strictest environmental laws in the world. Interest in the environment also goes beyond legislation. For example, many Germans spend their vacations hiking, camping, or volunteering with environmental organizations.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Environment and Society* How is concern for the environment part of Germany's political culture?

## Economy

Germany is an economic powerhouse. In fact, the country's GDP is the fourth-largest in the world, behind the United States, Japan, and China. However, Germany's per capita GDP is much higher than that of China, which has a far larger population.

Germany is one of the most prominent members of the European Union (EU). Most of Germany's trade is with other EU members. In addition, German has become a widely used language for business in Central Europe. German businesspeople are major investors in other Central European countries. The United States and Japan are other major trading partners.

The German economy is diverse. Businesses manufacture machinery, automobiles, electronics, and medical equipment. Chemicals, steel, and high-tech computer equipment are also important products.

Coal, iron ore, and other minerals helped make Germany an industrial power. In fact, the Ruhr Valley in western Germany is a major industrial center. Industries there developed around huge coal deposits. Today the Ruhr Valley is an almost continuous belt of cities and industries.

Almost half of the country's land is available for agriculture. German agriculture is efficient. Thus, farmers make up less than 3 percent of the population. Grains, potatoes, and sugar beets are major crops.

Nuclear power has provided about a third of Germany's electricity. However, in 2001 the government decided to gradually close all the nuclear power plants. Germany imports almost all of its oil.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Places and Regions* How productive is the German economy?



## Issues and Challenges

One important issue in Germany today is the country's changing population. (See Geography for Life: Germany's Aging Population.) Low birthrates, longer life expectancies, and a large number of immigrants are all changing Germany's population. The largest group of immigrants are from Turkey. They have migrated to Germany to work in its growing industries. Most live clustered together in the neighborhoods of big cities. Their Islamic religion, Turkish language, and distinct culture add to their isolation in Germany. In some cases, prejudice and violence against Turks and other groups have been a problem. Many other immigrants to Germany are ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union.

Since 1990 Germany has tried to bring the standard of living in the east up to that of the west. This effort has been difficult and costly. Many inefficient factories in the east were closed down. As a result, unemployment soared. With unemployment at almost 20 percent in eastern Germany, some Germans are becoming migrant workers in other European countries. Eastern Germany also suffered from heavy pollution during the Communist era, and the cleanup of the environment is just beginning.

Some easterners, or *Ossis*, feel that they are treated as second-class citizens. They resent that westerners, or *Wessis*, have a higher standard of living. Some *Ossis* also miss the lower costs of living and guaranteed jobs and housing that they had under communism. Even citizenship practices sometimes differ between *Ossis* and *Wessis*, a result of Germany's long period of division. For example, May Day, or May 1, was a major holiday in East Germany during the Communist era. It was a day to honor workers. Today some *Ossis* still organize parades to celebrate May Day. *Ossis* do this even though it is not an official holiday in the reunified Germany.

**READING CHECK:** *Places and Regions* How did different economic and political systems in East and West Germany influence economic, social, and environmental differences between the two regions after reunification?

### Section 1

## Review

**Define** alliances, balance of power

**Working with Sketch Maps** On a map of Central Europe that you draw or that your teacher provides, label Germany, Berlin, Bavaria, and the Ruhr Valley. In the margin of your map, identify the capital of Germany.

**Reading for the Main Idea**

- Human Systems** How was Germany divided after World War II?

- Human Systems** What role does Germany play in European economies?

- Environment and Society** What is the Ruhr Valley? Around what natural resource did its industries and cities grow?

### Critical Thinking

- Comparing** In what ways might people in eastern Germany have mixed views about the effects of reunification on their lives?



**INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD** *More than 2 million people of Turkish descent live in Germany today. Some are victims of persecution and discrimination, even though many were born in Germany. Only recently have new laws offered immigrant Turks full German citizenship. How have cultural beliefs shaped the political opportunities available to German Turks?*

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### Organizing What You Know

- Copy the time line below. Use it to identify important periods and events in Germany's history after 1871.

